

THE SOCIALIST PARTY

of Great Britain

**Report of the Proceedings
of the
Autumn Delegate Meeting,
held at Conway Hall,
London,
on 14th and 15th October 1989**

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Saturday morning, 14 October

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

Comrade H. Vallar was elected to chair the Meeting.

2. PERMISSION FOR DELEGATES TO SIT

P. Hope (General Secretary) reported, in accordance with Rule 8, that the Form C from Manchester Branch had arrived late.

P. Bennett (Manchester) explained that the delay had been due to a problem obtaining a quorum, due to shiftworking, to adopt it. It was agreed to allow the delegate from Manchester to sit.

S. Coleman (Islington): the branch had instructed its delegates to request that Camden and North West London branches be asked in advance if they would accept all decisions made at this ADM. If they refused to give such an undertaking they should not be allowed to sit.

J. D'Arcy (Camden): such a move would be out of order as the rulebook provided for delegates from any branch in good financial standing to sit as of right.

D. Davies (NW London): the question too was out of order.

The Chair moved on to the next item on the agenda.

3. ARRANGEMENT BY DELEGATES OF THE ORDER IN WHICH THE ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION ARE TO BE TAKEN

A show of hands indicated a majority in favour of proceeding item by item rather than employing the time-block system.

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. ORGANISATION AND INTERNAL MATTERS

1. Outstanding branch and group literature accounts at HO

D. Deutz (East London), opening, said that, as Party Treasurer, he needed guidance on how to proceed. Commercial practice would be to cut off supplies in cases of repeated failure to settle, but he doubted whether this would be acceptable in the Party.

J. Bradley (Enfield and Haringey): his branch had settled its literature and dues accounts since the publication of the Report to ADM which listed them as being in arrears.

R. Cook (Birmingham): this was a decision that could not be left to the Treasurer/Literature Secretary to make on his own; if anyone was to be cut off, this should be decided by the EC.

C. Slapper (Islington) reminded delegates, in his capacity as HO Assistant, that branches could claim credit for unsold copies of the Standard; a number hadn't done this, which made their debt to HO higher than it need be.

A. Heath (Eccles): his branch pursued a policy of paying for all lit ordered from HO whether or not they eventually sold it all.

S. Dowsett (non-delegate): branches in debt should consider ordering a more realistic number of Standards each month.

D. Deutz (East London) confirmed, as Treasurer, that his figures referred to the period ending 30 June this year. The worst offender was the World Socialist Party of Australia which hadn't paid for years and now owed over £400.

2. Methods of increasing Party income from dues

H. Edwards (West London), opening, said that other changes to the dues system, apart from doubling the amount, should be considered, in particular provision for payment of dues at a reduced rate by pensioners and unemployed members.

R. Cook (Birmingham): dues could be related to a member's income.

B. Roberts (Newcastle): £1 a month was a ridiculously low figure

for dues --a mere pint of beer a month. This should be at least doubled. Other forms of fund-raising such as raffles should also be considered by branches.

J. Usher(West London): other ideas thrown up in the branch discussion had been a discount for those paying in full at the beginning of the year and a requirement that branches pay dues to HO for all members on their books even, not to say especially, for those whose dues they agreed to waive.

H. Cottis(East London): very much in favour of DAPs and unemployed members paying something.

3. Should voting at inquorate branch meetings be valid at Conference?

The Chair drew delegates' attention to the Glasgow branch circular which recalled that this item arose out of a situation at this year's Conference when the votes of those members of Newcastle branch who had turned up for the special branch meeting had not been accepted on the grounds that there had be no quorum at that meeting.

B. Roberts(Newcastle): the branch felt that votes cast under such circumstances should be considered valid since branch votes were now counted on the basis of the number of members present and no longer on branch membership.

R. Cook(Birmingham): the recording of the votes of members of other branches should be brought into line with those of Central Branch where there was no quorum requirement so that every vote cast was counted; otherwise there would be a temptation for branches with a quorum problem to disband themselves and go into Central branch.

P. Lawrence(SW London): now that with the 1988 change of Rule Conference votes were virtually a poll of members, logic required the counting of votes cast at a non-quorate meeting. It wasn't certain, though, that a change of Rule was required to do this, as the Glasgow circular had suggested.

P. Lawrence(SW London) and B. Roberts(Newcastle) moved:

"ADM recommends that in future branch representation and branch voting at Conference shall not be dependent on a branch holding quorate meetings prior to Conference".

D. Donnelly(Glasgow): any such decision should be left to Conference.

J. Usher(West London): his branch was almost equally divided on the issue, a small majority being against counting votes cast at inquorate meetings since this did say something about the viability of the branch, which was relevant as long as the branch remained the basic unit of the Party.

S. Coleman(Islington) asked if the proposed change meant that delegates from the branch would be allowed to sit and vote on procedural and floor resolutions at Conference; if so, he was against it.

P. Lawrence(SW London): this was not the intention as branch representation at Conference was something governed by Rule. He asked permission of the meeting to delete the words "branch representation" from his motion.

The Chair noted that no-one objected to this.

J. D'Arcy(Camden); would this mean that if only one person attended the special branch meeting his or her vote would count?

D. Davies(NW London) agreed with the Islington delegate that branch representation was a separate matter altogether.

P. Bennett(Manchester): because a branch had trouble getting a quorum at all its meetings didn't mean that it wasn't viable

since active members were sometimes unable to attend all meetings because they worked shifts. Could such members be allowed to vote by post?

B. Johnson(Swansea): the viability of a branch should be judged from its a Form C not a lack of quorum at one particular meeting. P. Lawrence(SW London), winding up, repeated that, as Conference votes were no longer those of branches but of individual members, excluding the votes of members cast at inquorate meetings was not just an anomaly but intolerable from the point of view of democracy.

The resolution, as modified in the course of the discussion to:
"ADM recommends that in future branch voting at Conference shall not be dependent on a branch holding quorate meetings prior to Conference"
was carried by 16 votes to 4.

H. Edwards(West London): on the same logic, members who couldn't attend the special branch meeting should also be allowed to have their votes counted.

D. Davies(NW London): doing this would be more democratic.

S. Coleman(Islington): did the floor resolution that had just been passed mean that branches could send in their votes without being represented by delegates?

P. Lawrence(SW London): yes it did, but this was already the case under Rule 22.

4. Now that the Conference voting procedure has been made less dependent on how many Branch delegates attend Conference, would it make sense to implement the suggestion made in a Bristol Branch circular (Jan 1988) of Branches sending in their votes to the Standing Orders Committee after delegates have reported back from Conference discussions?

C. Slapper(Islington), opening, elaborated on this suggestion. The Chair said such a change would require a change of Rule.

P. Shannon(Lancaster): if such a change were to be made, what would be the purpose of the Autumn Delegate Meeting since ADM was supposed to be the place where ideas that could later be incorporated in instructed Conference motions were first aired?

D. Donnelly(Glasgow): such a change would make Conference less important. It would make for more bureaucracy not more democracy. Conference should be the power-house of the Party where the decisions were made, not just a debating club preceding a poll of members.

R. Cook(Birmingham): in spite of what the Lancaster delegate had said there was in fact no interlocking between ADM and Conference. Before changing the Rules this existing possibility should be fully used to make Conference a place where future activity was planned and decided.

P. Lawrence(SW London): the proposed new procedure would be too cumbersome.

A. Heath(Eccles): decisions were already not made at Conference, but before it in the special branch meetings. It was a good idea, when some new point not on the agenda was raised at Conference, to allow delegates to take the matter back to their branches before any decision was made.

D. Davies(NW London): the situation the Eccles delegate described could only arise over floor resolutions, which were not binding anyway, but not over instructed resolutions which had to appear on the agenda published well before Conference.

S. Easton(EC Member): there was a great advantage in decisions

being taken publicly in the presence of a large number of people. He was against policy-making by post.

C. Skelton(non-delegate): there was a problem with the suggestion as far as Central Branch members were concerned since they had no delegates.

C. Slapper(Islington), winding up, agreed that the Bristol proposal was not entirely satisfactory, but then neither was the present situation. Despite what the Glasgow delegate had said, decisions were only registered not made at Conference.

5. The relation of Party Polls to Conference Resolutions

V. Vanni(Glasgow). opening, said that there were some bad losers in the Party. For instance, 1984 Conference had heavily defeated a proposal to change the Party's name to the World Socialist Party. The supporters of this change refused to accept this verdict and called a Party Poll which merely confirmed the decision made at Conference. The same thing was now happening over the 1988 Conference Resolution on the use of the Party name which had been carried by the decisive margin of 32 votes to 16. Glasgow were opposed to the move in the Party to say that Conference resolutions were not valid till confirmed by a Party Poll. Conference resolutions should remain the main decision-making procedure in the Party, with Party Polls being called only in special circumstances, e.g. when the vote on some important matter had been very close or when some urgent decision was required between Conferences.

P. Shannon(Lancaster): Rule 26 on Party Poll was clear and didn't need changing: a Party Poll could be called by Conference, ADM, six branches or the EC.

J.D'Arcy(Camden): his branch had never challenged the 1988 Conference resolution, only the EC's interpretation of it. The effects of some Conference resolutions were not always apparent at the time they were carried, as with this one, which was a reason why the Party Poll option should be retained. Also, Conference could only make decisions within its particular field of jurisdiction.

C. Slapper(Islington): the new voting procedure, which was similar to a Party Poll, strengthened Glasgow's argument. The Camden delegate was arguing that certain issues were so important that they could not be made by Conference but only by a Party Poll, but if the branch held this view why had its delegates participated in the vote in 1988 on the use of the Party's name? If they had denounced it as unconstitutional and refused to take part in it at the time their argument here might carry more credibility.

D. Davies(NW London): the 32-16 vote on the 1988 resolution might have been decisive but that was under the old voting system.

A. Heath(Eccles): if Camden can get five other branches to support them then a Poll would be held; if not, they would have to try to get the 1988 decision changed by putting down a resolution at next year's Conference.

H. Young(NW London): it was not an abuse to appeal to a Party Poll as the Rulebook allowed this.

R. Headicar(non-delegate): a Party Poll should only be called under extreme circumstances. What those opposed to the 1988 resolution should now do was to put down a resolution at next year's Conference to test whether the new voting system would give a different result.

S. Easton(EC Member): a Party Poll was sovereign, the final arbiter on all matters. As such it was a very precious part of

our democratic decision-making procedures.
P. Deutz(EC Member): the 1988 resolution had been carried under the old voting system. The last time a Party Poll had been held on the issue it resulted in a decisive vote --229 votes to 72-- in favour of retaining the name "The Socialist Party of Great Britain". The Eccles delegate's proposal was the sensible solution.

S. Coleman(Islington): the logic of those who argued against the 1988 Conference resolution on the grounds that it was taken under a different voting system meant that we should ignore all Conference resolutions carried before the recent change of Rule on this point; which was absurd. As to the 1986 Party Poll, Comrade Deutz had committed the fallacy of concluding that the defeat of a proposal meant that its opposite has been carried. This was not so. In 1986 there had been a three-way split: those who favoured a change to World Socialist Party, those against any change at all, and those who wanted a change in Party practice other than a change of name. The third group, which included himself, had voted against a change of name, so the 1986 Poll result could not be regarded as a vote for no change; in fact it wasn't relevant at all to the controversy about the 1988 Conference resolution.

L. Cox(EC Member): those opposed to the 1988 Conference resolution should put a resolution down at Conference saying that Conference had no power to make such a decision, if that's what they really thought.

C. Skelton(non-delegate): if a decision made by Party Poll was more important than a Conference resolution the problem would arise of a branch wanting to put down a resolution for Conference that went against a decision that had been made by Party Poll. Would such a resolution have to be ruled out of order? If so, by whom? This problem had been avoided in the Party by treating Party Polls and Conference resolutions as being of equal status: the most recent decision, however reached, being the one in force. This was sensible and should continue.

K. Knight(non-delegate): both types of decision were not of equal status. A document published some years ago had stated that a Party Poll took precedence over a Conference resolution. That was right as a Party Poll was more representative than a Conference resolution despite the recent change in Conference voting procedures.

B. Roberts(Newcastle): the 1988 resolution had not changed the Party's name, only regulated its usage and that of its shortened form.

V. Vanni(Glasgow), winding up, said that under the Rules those opposed to a Conference resolution did have the constitutional right to call a Party Poll but it was not always morally right to do so; they should exercise restraint and try to get any decision changed by another Conference resolution.

B. Johnson(Swansea) proposed that items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 be taken together now, as they logically followed on from the discussion that had just finished.

D. Donnelly(Glasgow) suggested taking item 6 ("The future of workshops at Annual Conference") straightaway now before lunch.

D. Davies(NW London): item 7 ("The development of a Party strategy") could obviously not be cleared away quickly. After a show of hands, the Chair said she would take item 6 now and items 8-12 in conjunction after lunch.

6. The future of Workshops at Annual Conference

D. Donnelly(Glasgow), opening, said that workshops were a good idea but there was a need for a procedure for deciding what the subject should be; perhaps the preceding ADM could decide this.

H. McClaughlin(Bolton): a rigid formula should not be laid down yet. Let's keep the workshops going. For the time being the EC could ask branches and subcommittees for suggestions for subjects for at least two per Conference.

S. Coleman(Islington): there were two main reasons in favour of workshops. First, they allowed members to speak spontaneously and throw ideas around and, second, they allowed them to discuss as individual activists rather than as branch delegates. The subjects should not just be technical as up to now (e.g. printing) but also political. Conference should be totally reconstructed into a target-setting forum; the targets could be set on the third day, leaving the first and second days for workshops.

P. Lawrence(SW London): how had the subjects of the two workshops held up to now been decided?

S. Coleman(Islington): they just emerged.

P. Lawrence: that wasn't entirely satisfactory, as it was an important principle in the Party that it was the branches that set the Conference agenda. It would be a dangerous precedent to let the EC or subcommittees do so. Perhaps the final agenda could contain a choice of workshop subjects for delegates to decide on at Conference.

J. Usher(West London): the Standing Orders Committee should ask branches for suggestions when drawing up the Conference agenda.

R. Cook(Birmingham): Comrade Lawrence's idea was impractical as a workshop could not be decided at the last moment but required planning for at least six months.

R. Headicar(non-delegate): the procedure must not be made too complicated; otherwise workshops would be just like Conferences whereas one of their advantages was to involve those reluctant to speak at Conference.

S. Easton(EC Member): there were dangers in allowing decisions to be made by workshops which were inevitably not as representative as branch meetings since they were attended by those particularly interested in a subject.

P. Deutz(EC Member) confessed to being lukewarm about workshops which seemed to her to be little more than the same members discussing in a different setting. The relations between Conference and workshops should be carefully worked out with workshops being perhaps a suitable forum for discussing some of the Items for Discussion.

D. Donnelly(Glasgow), winding up, said the discussion had confirmed that there was at present no structure for deciding on subjects for workshops. The best idea that had emerged was to get branches and subcommittees to submit proposals to the EC.

Saturday afternoon

General Secretary's Report. Central Organiser's Report

In answer to questions on his report, P. Hope(General Secretary) agreed that the Form C did need revising on the statistics requested for attendance at meetings.

F. Morgan(non-delegate): had anyone any suggestions for getting subcommittees to cooperate more, as the General Secretary had said in his report was needed?

G. Shapson(non-delegate), speaking as the Islington branch Treasurer, explained that since November last year £800 had been

collected from branch members as back dues, but this was not fully reflected in the Master Form C as it only covered the period between January and June this year.

J. D'Arcy(Camden) complained about the reference to "undemocratic behaviour" by two branches in the Central Organiser's report. Were the two branches being asked to abandon their series of propaganda meetings?

K. Knight(NW London): such broad allegations had no place in a Central Organiser's report.

S. Coleman(Central Organiser): this was not a reference to the positive things the two branches might have done but to their refusal to apply the 1988 Conference resolution on the use of the Party's name for propaganda and publicity purposes. Such things as hanging a placard saying "The Socialist Party of Great Britain" over the Party platform at Hyde Park because it only said "The Socialist Party" only served to demoralise members as they saw democratic decisions being flouted.

8. Use of the Party's name

9. The value of the "brand name" The Socialist Party of Great Britain

10. The actions of Camden and North West London Branches with regard to the 1988 Conference ruling on the use of the Party's name: the consequences of these, the response of the EC, and the action to be taken by the Party

11. The refusal of the EC to hold a Party Poll on the changing of the Party's name.

12. The threat posed by Camden and North West London branches to Party democracy

23. Democracy and the Party

D. Davies(NW London) asked for item 23 to be taken with the others. The Standing Orders Committee had misunderstood the item as referring to the Party's attitude to movements for political democracy under capitalism and so placed it in section D ("Policy, Principles and Theory") rather than in A where it really belonged since the branch wanted a discussion on democracy within the Party.

The Chair agreed to adding item 23 to the others as those who wanted to discuss the Party's attitude to political democracy could do so under item 22 ("the socialist attitude to civil liberties").

H. Cottis(East London), opening on item 8, said his branch was not in agreement with the present policy of "we are the Socialist Party of Great Britain but we call ourselves "the Socialist Party" except in certain exceptional circumstances when we call ourselves "the Socialist Party of Great Britain". They wanted this to be reconsidered to see if it was still accepted by a majority of members.

D. Davies(NW London), opening on 9, said that, despite what some claimed, the issue at stake was the Party's name. Some had favoured a change to the World Socialist Party to give more emphasis to the world dimension of socialism, but this had been turned down by a Party Poll in 1986. So those who thought along these lines had decided on another way to emphasise the world dimension: to drop the use of "of Great Britain" in our name. NW London branch felt this was foolish as it meant throwing away all the support and sympathy built up over the years as the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the SPGB. Nor had this idea led, as had been suggested, to any increase in membership. The branch

also objected to being told that they must never ever use the full name of the Party in propaganda. They doubted whether such a ban enjoyed majority support in the Party, which was no doubt why those in favour were against putting it to a Party Poll.

P. Lawrence(SW London), introducing item 10, said he had been instructed to move a floor resolution on this matter.

The Chair said she would allow the motion to be deposed but would only have it read and taken at the appropriate moment, i.e. after all the items had been opened on and when the discussion on them had got fully under way.

P. Lawrence(SW London): his branch was unanimous that the actions of Camden and NW London branches were unquestionably undemocratic in that they had acted against the 1988 Conference resolution. This was a dangerous precedent that dented the democratic integrity of our organisation. This compromised our speakers who could now no longer honestly say that our organisation functioned democratically; it also undermined the democratic authority of Conference and in fact made a farce of it. Our existence as a socialist party was threatened since we couldn't be a socialist party without being democratic. The branches had to comply, while working to get the resolution they disagreed with rescinded. To resolve the substantive issue of the use of the Party's name, the branch felt that a Party Poll was required.

J. D'Arcy(Camden), introducing item 11, said his branch was not challenging the 1988 Resolution but the EC's interpretation of it which it felt should go to a Party Poll. The resolution through effectively changing the Party's name had in fact been out of order as it conflicted with the D of P, clauses 7 and 8 of which committed the Party to capturing political power in the particular state called Great Britain. It was the 1988 EC that had been guilty of action detrimental to the interests of the Party by banning the use of the Party's name from the platform at Hyde Park. The Socialist Standard was now no longer the official organ of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and branches which continued to use the Party's name were being harrassed. The full name was only being retained to receive legacies. The branch had reached the conclusion that a section of the membership wanted to change the identity of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and to break with its past and traditions; they were a parasitic growth who wanted to create a new party to replace the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Camden rejected the hypocritical and muddled arguments about democracy of these "social democrats" within the Party and affirmed that the Socialist Party of Great Britain will continue in existence and will carry on with its propaganda.

B. Johnson(Swansea) and S. Coleman(Islington) said that the last speaker was out of order under article 15 of Standing Orders which forbade the impugning of other members' socialist integrity except as part of a formal charge of action detrimental under Rule 33.

V. Vanni(Glasgow), opening on item 12, said he had listened to the previous speaker in sheer disbelief. Evidently, the situation was more serious than he had thought. Glasgow had watched developments over the last 18 months with dismay. Two branches had not complied with a Conference resolution and every time the EC had called them to order they had replied with arrogance and lawyer's quibbles, and this from branches which had always been the first to criticise other branches. What they were doing was an attack on Party democracy. His branch had instructed him to make one last appeal to them to come back from the brink;

also objected to being told that they must never ever use the full name of the Party in propaganda. They doubted whether such a ban enjoyed majority support in the Party, which was no doubt why those in favour were against putting it to a Party Poll.

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they should confine their opposition to the 1988 resolution within the rulebook, i.e. try to get it rescinded by another Conference resolution, but until then they had to comply with it. D. Davies (NW London), opening on item 23, said that Camden and NW London were two separate branches with their own views. NW London agreed that the Party must be democratic but held that the 1988 resolution did not, and could not, ban the use of the Party's name of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. If the Party's had been to expunge the political identity of the SPGB then the resolution could not have been in order as Conference had no power to abolish the Socialist Party of Great Britain. But why did some members want a change to the Socialist Party? This was what the Labour Party was often called, so did they want to be associated with the Labour Party? NW London urged the EC to hold a Poll on the question of whether the Party's name should be changed from the Socialist Party of Great Britain to the Socialist Party.

J. Usher (West London) said that he too had been instructed to move a floor resolution.

The Chair said it could be deposited but, like the other motion, would be read out and taken at the appropriate moment.

B. Johnson (Swansea): the discussion was in danger of degenerating into a slanging match. If Camden and NW London persisted they would be able to force a poll, even if it was one on their own expulsion.

J. Coxall (Yorkshire): it was ludicrous to say you couldn't do something because it conflicted with the D of P. Courses of action should be argued and decided on their merits not by appeals to texts. The two branches should accept the 1988 resolution while working to try to change it.

A. Heath (Eccles): the 1988 Conference resolution did not change the Party's name, so this was not the issue. The issue was that Camden and NW London had not obeyed a Conference decision; they should comply with it rapidly or face disciplinary action. Nor would a change of name be a change of policy, as they had tried to argue.

D. Donnelly (Glasgow): we were talking about the use of the Party's name, not about changing it. We were, and still are, all members of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. All the 1988 resolution had decided was that we should call ourselves the Socialist Party for propaganda purposes. This dropping of "Great Britain" here was what a majority of members had indicated they wanted. But this was not the issue today. The issue was the refusal of two branches to accept a Conference decision. We must behave democratically in our internal affairs, otherwise our claim to be a germ of future society -- an organisation with no leaders and no dogmas -- would no longer be valid. Camden were saying that the Conference resolution contradicted the D of P and that the EC were guilty of action detrimental for trying to enforce it. This was accusing the Conference of action detrimental, but how could the Party accuse itself of this? What the Camden delegate had said about there being "social democrats" in the Party was absurd and should be ignored as a strange aberration on his part. NW London had taken a different position but their demand for a poll to change the name from the Socialist Party of Great Britain to the Socialist Party was not on the agenda as nobody was proposing this. If things continued the way they were going a Party Meeting would have to be held to decide whether or not the two branches should be wound up.

M. Judd (SW London): Comrade D'Arcy had suggested that there was a

conspiratorial element in the Party concerned with changing its nature, objectives, direction, points of view and attitudes. Comrade Judd said he had attended good meetings in Holborn organised by Camden and NW London branches; he had also attended good meetings nearby organised by Islington branch. He had tried to see if different views were being expressed at these latter meetings but hadn't been able to detect any. So how could Camden say what they said? There was no evidence for it. Camden had got an obsession about some supposed conspiracy to detract the Party from the course it had always followed. As to Party democracy, their argument that it was they who were acting democratically was lamentable; by being anti-democratic in not accepting Conference democracy it was they who were endangering the existence of the Party and its traditions.

C. Slapper (Islington): both Camden and NW London had taken part in the democratic discussion and vote on the 1988 resolution, so they were not entitled to turn round now and say it was null and void. The NW London delegate had been out of order in asking if the supporters of the use of "the Socialist Party" would prefer to be in the Labour Party--

D. Davies (NW London): that was not what I said. We only wondered whether they wanted to be associated with the Labour Party.

C. Slapper (Islington) said he couldn't see the difference. The 1988 resolution had been quite clear as it had laid down conditions when the full name should be used as well as when the shortened name should be. Camden and NW London had questioned the powers of Conference. Conference has very wide powers: if it can change the Rules, then it can also decide to abbreviate our official name for some purposes. Islington branch were against a Party Poll because this would be to set a dangerous precedent; it would sanction a branch that disagreed with a Conference resolution defying it until a Poll was seen as the only way out. Camden and NW London had tried, as they were fully entitled to, to call a Party Poll but had failed to attract sufficient support from other branches, partly because of the subject they wanted it on --changing rather than abbreviating the Party's name-- was not an issue.

R. Cook (Birmingham): he too had followed the affair with disbelief. Disbelief that so much time and energy had been devoted to what was so small an issue. As a socialist, Marxist and materialist, he was aware that all things change but had been dismayed at how conservative the Party had proved to be.

S. Coleman (Islington): we are the Socialist Party of Great Britain but we call ourselves the Socialist Party, what was wrong with that? In fact he was very pleased with the decision to drop the term "Great Britain" as he detested it and all it suggested. We have a democratic procedure in the Party which was being ignored at the moment. This could not be tolerated. When D'Arcy calls us "parasites on the Party" he revealed his true views. Comrade Coleman said that he personally had been waiting for ten long years for him to come out with this as it was a ground for getting him out of the Party, which should have happened years ago.

H. Edwards (West London): the last contribution had shown just how deep feelings ran on this issue, but why should such a fuss be made over what we called ourselves when "socialist" had become a word used to mean all sorts of things we didn't stand for? The EC should settle the matter by calling a Party Poll or Camden and NW London should put a resolution at next year's Conference saying that the Party's full name can be used on all occasions.

S. Easton (EC Member): the Party had not changed its name, either formally or effectively. Organisations can, and do, have different names for different purposes. Camden and NW London have exhibited a depth of irrationality on this issue, even objecting to ballot papers for an internal election because they didn't bear the words "of Great Britain". There was no rational reason for their attitude as the D of P, with the full name, appeared on all our literature. They should fall into line with the rest of the Party or face a charge of action detrimental.

H. Young (non-delegate): there was only one possible motive for monkeying about with the Party's name: to attract new members, but this hadn't worked. The change of the name on the Party's platform at Hyde Park had led to workers, and not just opponents, asking what was happening. Some members wanted to change the Party's name as a prelude to watering down its principles. The 1988 resolution had been out of order, unconstitutional and in direct conflict with the establishment of the Party in 1904.

R. Headicar (non-delegate): he was sickened by the whole dispute and the passions it had generated. The issue was one of democracy which should be settled, without further bickering, by the two branches putting a resolution down for decision at next Conference under the new voting procedure.

G. Slapper (non-delegate): Camden claimed that the 1988 resolution was in breach of the D of P but a name was not a political principle. Our principles had neither been adapted nor revised by the 1988 resolution. Camden and NW London were flouting a democratic decision using the quite unacceptable argument that the majority had been manipulated by a minority.

P. Deutz (EC Member): she disagreed with parts of the 1988 resolution but agreed that the only way to change it was by a resolution on the Conference agenda. Unlike Camden and NW London, she did not think that our principles were at stake. She was tired of both sides and completely dissociated herself from the contribution of the Camden delegate which was way over the top even if the dispute did arise out of past frictions which she didn't want to go into again. Both sides should exercise restraint and Camden and NW London must not use the full name in propaganda until the matter had been tested at next year's Conference.

G. Wilson (NW London): he had received a ballot paper on which the words "of Great Britain" had been added by hand; as far as he was concerned this made it invalid and he wouldn't be voting.

G. Shapson (non-delegate): we were a small party which could not afford a fratricidal conflict. The Delegate Meeting did have the power to call a Party Poll but before a Poll was called Camden and NW London must agree to abide by its result, whatever it turned out to be.

S. Coleman (Islington) and C. Slapper (Islington) moved that the two motions be considered next. This was carried by 16 votes to 6. The Chair said she had doubts about accepting the SW London motion as it had been typed out, indicating that it had been preprepared and so did not arise out of the discussion.

After P. Lawrence (SW London), D. Davies (NW London), K. Knight (NW London) and S. Coleman (Islington) had spoken, the Chair said she would accept the motion as being in order.

P. Lawrence (SW London) and M. Judd (SW London) then moved:

"That the following be put as the subject of a Party Poll:
Do you agree that the Party's full name "The Socialist Party of Great Britain" be used in the following cases:

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"That the following be put as the subject of a Party Poll:
Do you agree that the Party's full name "The Socialist Party of Great Britain" be used in the following cases:

- (a) Legal documents, Forms A to G, membership cards
- (b) The World Socialist Movement listing box, the address of the Party box on the inside page of the SS giving details of EC meetings
- (c) On the covers of the SS, pamphlets, leaflets and all official publications of the Party
- (d) On all occasions where the address of the Head Office is given, e.g. headed notepaper, adverts for socialist material
- (e) In the titles of meetings and debates and as the organiser of them
- (g) Manifestoes, election addresses, tapes, videos, etc.
- (h) On the Head Office shop front and elsewhere where the Party's name is used

OTHERWISE, that in the course of the Party's normal propaganda, written or spoken, the names "The Socialist Party of Great Britain" (SPGB) or "The Socialist Party" can be used completely and freely interchangeably as has been the practice in the past".

P. Lawrence(SW London), opening, said his branch felt that the matter should go to a Party Poll. The change involved, even though not a change of name, was still a big change that should have the endorsement of a vote of all members. Sometimes there are differences between decisions made through Conference and decisions made through a Party Poll, as for instance there had been over the new procedure for recording votes at Conference which had been rejected by Conference and then carried by a Poll. This showed that we cannot be absolutely sure that a Conference vote did reflect the views of the whole membership. The only way to find this out was a Party Poll. SW London were not proposing this to placate the undemocratic elements in Camden and NW London branches. Far from it, as the branch had said in a circular, if these two branches continued to defy Party democracy they should be charged under Rule 33.

At this point the Chair said that, due to a prior engagement, she had to vacate the chair. Comrade S. Ross was elected to chair the rest of the session.

M. Judd(SW London): there were two distinct issues. The issue of the Party Poll and that of the change in the use of the Party's name. The acrimony exhibited and the time wasted on the latter showed that there was now no alternative to calling a Party Poll to settle the matter.

C. Slapper(Islington): although the movers had made it clear that their intention was not to placate Camden and NW London this was what holding a Poll would be seen as. Islington was strongly against a Party Poll, especially as there was no guarantee that this would settle the issue since we didn't know if the anti-democratic minority in the Party would accept a result that went against them.

P. Shannon(Lancaster): why wasn't it Camden and NW London that had proposed this resolution?

J. Usher(West London): the proposed wording of the Poll was not to confirm the 1988 Conference resolution but to repeal it and should be opposed on this ground too.

V. Vanni(Glasgow) was against holding a Poll. He wouldn't have objected if this had been done in 1988 but Camden were now claiming that the decision made then was unrepresentative. In these circumstances holding a Poll would be a surrender to them.

S. Coleman(Islington) was against a Poll. There were two unanswered questions. First, what would happen between now and

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the declaration of the result of the Poll: would the two branches comply with the 1988 resolution during that period? Logically, they had to reply "no" as they had denounced it as being in conflict with the D of P. Second, assuming that the Poll was lost, would they accept this result? Once again, how could they as this too would conflict with the D of P?

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D. Davies(NW London): her branch had been calling for a Party Poll all along. As to the accusation of not abiding by the 1988 resolution, how many times had they broken it? Only once, in a newspaper advertisement for a meeting. Other branches had broken this and other resolutions without provoking the same criticism.

J. D'Arcy(Camden): we do not object to the abbreviation of the Party name. Both usages were OK by them; what they objected to was the ban on the use of the Party's name of The Socialist Party of Great Britain. This was the issue. True, the holding of a Poll does appear to placate us but it was the only way of avoiding a split in the Party.

D. Donnelly(Glasgow): Comrade D'Arcy was now adopting a different stance to that he'd taken in the morning. But if he didn't object to the use of "The Socialist Party", why had his branch returned the ballot papers for the recent EC vacancy? To agree to a Party Poll now would make a mockery of all our Conferences. The 1988 resolution had been decisively carried after a full discussion; to put it to a poll now would be to kow-tow to those who threatened splits as a way of trying to overturn a decision they disagreed with.

B. Roberts(Newcastle): his branch was against a Poll as the matter had already been properly settled in 1988.

M. Judd(SW London): democracy was an on-going process, which meant that decisions can always be reviewed. This applied to the 1988 resolution as to any other. If a Poll was rejected now, it would only delay the inevitable as sooner or later the matter would have to go to the whole membership.

R. Cook(Birmingham): if the question proposed by SW London for a Poll was carried, it would create a situation that had never existed before as it laid down that in all our written material the full name of Socialist Party of Great Britain would have to be used.

K. Knight(NW London): this whole move against the two branches was a continuation of a campaign that had begun ten years ago at a secret meeting at a member's house--

C. Slapper(Islington): out of order.

The Chair appealed for calm.

A. Heath(Eccles): his branch too was against a Poll.

D. Davies(NW London) and K. Knight(NW London) moved that "the meeting adjourn till tomorrow". This was overwhelmingly lost on a show of hands.

P. Lawrence(SW London), winding up, said that this really was a special case where holding a Poll would not make a mockery of Conference decisions.

The motion was lost by 8 votes for to 19 against.

Sunday morning, 15 October

Fraternal greetings from a comrade in South Africa were read.

Reports of the Central Branch Secretary, HO Assistant, Premises Committee, Education Organiser, Legacies Committee, Overseas Contacts Secretary, Library Committee, Tapes Committee

H. Walters(non-delegate) asked about the fate of the report of the Human Nature Pamphlet Committee. The EC had passed the matter

to the Education Organiser to consider for publication as an internal education bulletin. He had written to the Education Organiser about this but had received no reply. P. Bennett (Education Organiser) replied that he had considered publication as an educational bulletin unnecessary as the material had already been circulated in the Party and, besides, contained matter that was not strictly relevant to the subject. He would now put this in writing to the EC.

P. Lawrence (SW London): at Conference most delegates had seen the approach outlined by the Human Nature Pamphlet Committee as being far too theoretical for a popular pamphlet. Nevertheless the report did contain some very useful material that ought not to be wasted.

P. Lawrence (SW London) and P. Hart (SW London) moved:
"This ADM recommends that the material produced by the Human Nature Pamphlet Committee be passed to the SSPC for editing as a short series to be printed in the Socialist Standard"
This resolution was carried by 11 votes to 4.

European Election Report

C. May (NW London): what had the NALGO strike had to do with the failure of the branch to send to the EC the names of those who signed the candidate's nomination as required by Rule 28?

B. Roberts (Newcastle): at the time the report was prepared the Town Hall where the nomination papers had been deposited was on strike. This was now over and the papers were being sent.

J. Usher (West London): had the campaign revived activity in the Sunderland and Seaham areas as had been one of its aims?

B. Roberts: some members from these areas had participated in the campaign but the first attempt to organise a meeting to set up a Sunderland Group had not been successful; another attempt was to be made at the end of the month.

D. Donnelly (Glasgow): he had had doubts about the wisdom of contesting but had to admit that having 75,000 manifestos distributed by the capitalist State for £1000 was a good deal; and as this was only a third of the constituency we could have had three times as many distributed for the same price.

B. Roberts: the branch was now planning to contest the local elections next May, the next General Election and then the next European elections in 1994. He urged other branches to make similar plans.

R. Cook (Birmingham): had the manifestos had to be put into addressed envelopes?

B. Roberts: No, they had merely to be sorted into bundles of 100.

A. Heath (Eccles) congratulated Newcastle on having done a fantastic job. Eccles too would be contesting the local elections next year and were preparing to contest a parliamentary seat.

C. Skelton (non-delegate): Rule 28 would seem to rule out the extension of electoral activity that was being envisaged as it required 10 members or sympathisers to live in the ward or constituency being contested, which was hardly the case anywhere.

W. Buchanan (EC Member): why hadn't the branch kept a copy of those who had signed the nomination papers? Nor was "success" appropriate since this could only be applied to our election campaigns when our candidate was elected.

B. Roberts: there were degrees of success. Newcastle judged it was a success to have distributed 80,000 leaflets and had coverage in the local press and on local radio and TV, as this was more publicity for our ideas in the North East than we had ever had before.

Items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 23 (continued)

The Chair read the motion standing in the names of J. Usher (West London) and H. Edwards (West London):

"That at the next instance of breaching of Conference Resolution V51, 1988, the EC suspends the offending branch and calls a Party Poll in respect of that branch's dissolution and transfer of its members to Central Branch".

P. Hart (SW London): this was out of order as it proposed a course of disciplinary action other than applying Rule 33.

The Chair said she was inclined to agree.

D. Donnelly (Glasgow) didn't see why the motion was out of order as it was only a recommendation. He, seconded by S. Coleman (Islington), moved an amendment:

"Delete from 'calls a Party Poll' to end and replace by: charges the branch or branches taking such action with action detrimental under Rule 33. The EC should ensure that, in such circumstances, members of such a branch or branches shall be given an opportunity to dissociate themselves from such action, and may thereby be exempted and transferred to a different branch as a fully accredited member".

J. Usher (West London) said he was prepared to withdraw his motion in favour of the amendment.

C. May (NW London) questioned whether he could do this if he had been under branch instructions to move it.

The Chair said she would accept both motions but confine discussion to the amendment.

J. D'Arcy (Camden) and R. Cook (Birmingham) moved that the vote be taken. This was lost by 8 votes for to 14 against.

S. Coleman (Islington), opening, said that if a branch would not accept Party democracy then the EC had to tell them that it was time for them to go. As expelling the whole branch would be unfair to branch members who might not be involved in, or agree with, the branch's undemocratic actions, the amendment offered them a chance to opt out of being charged.

J. D'Arcy (Camden): did the resolution mean that the branches had to cancel their coming series of 12 propaganda meetings?

R. Cook (Birmingham): of course it didn't. What was at issue was not the meetings but the way they were advertised.

J. D'Arcy: would it be a breach of the Conference resolution if the chairman announced that the meeting was organised by the Socialist Party of Great Britain?

J. Usher (West London): everyone was sick of the whole affair. We must now make it clear to the branches that they had gone too far and that, if they persisted, this time something would be done about it. The issue could only be resolved by one side backing down and that side couldn't be the majority.

G. Wilson (NW London) wanted prior notice of what was being planned against the two branches.

A. Heath (Eccles): the issue was simple: either the branches abided by the Conference decision or they didn't; if they refused to then disciplinary action was inevitable.

D. Donnelly (Glasgow): the members of the two branches must have known what would happen if they willfully, even boastfully, set out not to apply a Conference resolution. Comrade D'Arcy said Conference had no right to make the decision in question. He was wrong and must be told that Conference did have this power. So the message to them was: "don't do it again or you'll be charged".

B. Roberts (Newcastle): supported the resolution. He had joined the Socialist Party of Great Britain because he was a socialist

and not an anarchist. If the two branches were allowed to get away with it, Party democracy would be threatened.

P. Shannon(Lancaster): the resolution did not invoke Rule 33. It was not a move to expel them but a public warning of what would happen if they persisted.

P. Lawrence(SW London): we can't have two ads appearing in the same paper, one in the name of "the Socialist Party" and the other in the name of "the Socialist Party of Great Britain", as had happened on one occasion in the past. The Party had the right to get its act together so as to prevent this happening again, as it had done with the 1988 Conference resolution. SW London felt that this resolution had been too stringent but the way to fight it was through the Party's democratic machinery. The two branches' stance was totally self-defeating. In the face of it, the Party's democratic authority had to be re-asserted.

V. Vanni(Glasgow): Camden and NW London didn't seem to realise the tremendous anger, even fury, that their attitude had generated, but they were now being given one more chance. All they have to do is to comply with the wishes of the majority. It was sad to have to be considering the expulsion of some members who had spent their whole life in the Party. He would make one last appeal to them: by all means stick to your views but fight for them within the Rules.

C. May(NW London): why were Camden and NW London being singled out for not having applied the 1988 resolution? Newcastle branch hadn't applied it either over their election manifesto. Nor had the SSPC in the Standard. The resolution spoke of the next occasion; well, this was coming soon as the branches were preparing a leaflet to advertise their coming series of meetings which, as in the past, would bear the Party's full name. If that was against your democracy, then too bad.

C. Slapper(Islington): the 1988 Resolution specifically laid down that the full name should be used in certain places in the Standard.

A. Buick(EC Member): the Newcastle election manifesto bore the full name as we didn't want to risk having the Post Office refuse to deliver them on the grounds that they carried a different name from that on the ballot paper. Besides, the spirit of the 1988 resolution was that in an international context, such as the European elections were, we should refer to ourselves as the Socialist Party of Great Britain since that was what we were as opposed, for instance, to the Socialist Party of Canada or Australia. This showed that the resolution was not completely inflexible and did allow a certain leeway. Indeed this had been granted to the branches, over the Camden banner and some leaflets, but in placing an ad in a national newspaper the two branches had gone too far. It now appeared that the EC had been mugs to have shown a little tolerance and flexibility as this was now being used to denounce them as inconsistent.

J. Dunn(Yorkshire): democracy was the real issue, not the Party name, and it was essential that democracy should prevail.

J. D'Arcy(Camden): all the branches had been doing was carrying on propaganda as the Socialist Party of Great Britain which he personally had been doing since 1945. Some members were making a theological principle of democracy, placing it above the Party's principles, but democracy was only a tool that we used for our internal housekeeping. He personally, not the branch, had placed the ad in The Guardian; the whole incident had been blown up out of all proportion. As to the platform at Hyde Park, not putting the full name on it was only an EC interpretation of the

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resolution which had made no mention of this. The branch had been trying to work out why some members wanted to ban the use of the full name in propaganda and publicity. He believed that it was because they had changed their minds about the Declaration of Principles. The branch, however, would continue to carry out propaganda in line with the D of P. If they fell foul of some technicality, then they would be charged but they were not going to shut up shop.

J. Coxall (Yorkshire) and P. Bennett (Manchester) moved that the question be put. This was carried unanimously.

S. Coleman (Islington), winding up, said that Comrade May had announced that the branches will be producing a leaflet that didn't comply with the 1988 resolution, so we were now no longer discussing an "if" but a "when". He said that if he felt, like some members of the two branches evidently did, that the Party was no longer socialist, then he'd leave. To say that the D of P came above democracy was absurd as the D of P itself laid down that socialism and democracy were inseparable as both an end and a means. The membership could not tolerate a minority refusing to accept a democratic decision on the pretext that a majority of members were no longer socialists.

The amendment was carried by 23 votes to 6 and the resolution, so amended, was also carried by 23-6.

Saturday afternoon.

7. The development of a Party strategy

S. Coleman (Islington): the Party should adopt a more "professional" approach by setting annual targets. To do this Conference would need to be completely restructured to turn it from a place where branches talked about matters in a vague, general way into one where plans for future activity were discussed and choices made. Before Conference each year every subcommittee should submit a set of costed objectives; Conference should then select certain of these targets. There should also be a report on the political situation. This year issues such as the Labour revival, the Greens and developments in Eastern European could have been analysed, for instance.

P. Shannon (Lancaster): his branch welcomed this move as it had been thinking about the same matter for a number of years. But there did appear to be some confusion between "strategy" and "co-ordination" and his branch was against something being organised from the centre. We had to approach people in stages, beginning with getting them to take an interest in politics before we could introduce our ideas to them. This was what Lancaster was doing in a selected area of about 500 houses.

J. Bradley (Enfield and Haringey): in the documents the word "strategy" was not being used properly. Annual programmes were not a strategy but should be based on a strategy. This in its turn should be based on Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach" which said that you learn by actually doing things not just by formulating proposals. As the word suggested, strategy involved a campaign on military-type lines based on intelligence reports and aimed at destroying the enemy's position before developing our own more positive one; it also required a high morale in the Party, which was lacking at present.

R. Cook (Birmingham): have any specific plans for restructuring Conference been drawn up?

B. Roberts (Newcastle): there was a need for a strategy and his branch thought it should be based on contesting all elections, at local, national and European levels. Our whole function was to

persuade the working class to become socialists and the best way was to contest elections.

C. May(NW London): the points in the so-called strategy document "Plans for Party Growth" presented to ADM seemed to him to be no different to what had always been included in the subcommittees' ordinary reports to Conference and ADM. Targetting had been tried before, but had not got anywhere.

L. Cox(EC Member): the report was new as it was oriented towards future activity rather than just recording past activity.

S. Easton(EC Member): in reply to Comrade Cook, the EC was not doing much about restructuring Conference as some EC members were lukewarm about the whole idea.

D. Deutz(EC Member): it wasn't just a question of being lukewarm but of a difficulty of knowing what was meant. In any event, the EC could not restructure Conference. A political report might be a good idea, but who was going to draw it up?

S. Coleman(Islington), winding up, said the discussion had been disappointing perhaps because it was not about actually drawing up plans but about making plans about how to make plans. He could not agree with Comrade Bradley who had in effect argued for doing nothing till Party morale was high. That was a passivist position that should be rejected.

S. Coleman(Islington) and C. Slapper(Islington) moved:

"That the EC ensure that the 1990 Conference has strategic targets to consider along the lines of the 1988 Conference resolution on national strategy. The procedure of Conference be restructured for this purpose along the lines proposed by Comrade Buick in his May 1988 statement on this matter".

J. Coxall(Yorkshire): did this involve changing the voting procedure along the lines mentioned in item for discussion No. 4?

S. Slapper(Islington): No, it simply re-iterated the terms of a resolution passed by Conference in 1988 and so was just a reminder to the EC.

P. Bennett(Manchester): what was in the document drawn up by Comrade Buick in May 1988?

A. Buick(EC Member): as Assistant Secretary he had drawn up a document for the EC that dealt solely with possible procedures for deciding a strategy. It had outlined a plan involving the EC asking subcommittees to submit, with their report on activity in the first six months of the year, plans for their activity in the following calendar year. This would be submitted to ADM. The EC would then reconsider them and submit an if need be revised version to branches with the call for items for inclusion in the preliminary Conference agenda, the aim being to encourage branches to put down motions in favour (or against) the various proposals. The EC had in fact followed this procedure so far. If it was continued, branches could expect to receive a strategy document with the call for items for the preliminary agenda in December.

The resolution was carried by 21 votes to nil.

Report of the Print Committee

H. McLaughlin(Bolton): what plans existed to train new members of the Committee?

C. Beqley(Print Committee): one training session for interested members known to the Committee had been organised on the Committee's own initiative.

H. McLaughlin: the EC should take the initiative here and put out a general appeal.

R. Cook(Birmingham): trainees could do the printing of EC Minutes

and other internal documents, leaving the experienced members to concentrate on printing the Standard.

Report of the Socialist Standard Production Committee

S. Coleman(Islington): what was being done about the proposal to increase the price of the Standard from 40p to 50p?

A. Buick(SSPC): there was as yet no concrete proposal to do this; it was merely one of the SSPC's strategy proposals, as a means of finding funds to finance the promotion of the Standard.

A. Heath(Eccles), D. Donnelly(Glasgow) and C. Skelton(non-delegate) all spoke against a rise in price.

H. Cottis(East London) and A. Heath(Eccles) moved that "the price of the Socialist Standard be retained at 40p".
The resolution was carried by 13 votes to 3.

B. PARTY LITERATURE

13. The advisability of improving the front page of the Standard.

D. Donnelly(Glasgow): the branch had put this item down with a view to getting a discussion going amongst delegates on this.

P. Shannon(Lancaster): why wasn't the Standard post-dated as this would allow it to sell over a longer period?

R. Cook(Birmingham) was in favour of illustrations on the front cover, but if one month there was nothing suitable an article could be printed there. A bad cover was worse than none.

H. Cottis(East London): in favour of post-dating the Standard. Nor was there anything wrong with a black-and-white cover from time to time.

J. Bradley(Enfield and Haringey): those who designed the front cover should not forget that half the population were women.

J. Coxall(Yorkshire): the lay-out of the Standard was OK, but the political slogan on the front needed to be thought out very carefully.

A. Buick(SSPC): the person who did the front cover had an invidious job as their work was mercilessly judged by every individual member. The change-over to printing at HQ had meant that we were not always able to produce a cover to the same standard as when it was done externally. But this could eventually be rectified when we had the money to buy other equipment, a camera for instance.

G. Thomas(SSPC) added that we didn't know why some covers sold well while others didn't. Branches should tell the Committee what sort of cover they liked. There was no objection in principle to occasionally printing an article on the cover.

G. Wilson(NW London) didn't like cartoons in the Standard and suggested reducing the number of issues per year.

14. Would the appearance (cover and layout) of the Socialist Standard be improved by the EC appointing an additional SSPC member with special responsibility for the visual design aspect of the Committee's work? (This would involve rescinding the 1985 Conference Resolution which restructured the SSPC to have no "layout" member appointed by the EC).

C. Slapper(Islington), opening, answered in the affirmative. Since 1985 this job had been done by a member co-opted by the editorial committee, but it was too important for this as the fact that most magazines had a separate designer indicated.

R. Marshall(East London) had some sympathy with this view, but the problem of who the design member was responsible to --the EC or the SSPC-- had to be settled and he could see no practicable alternative to this being the SSPC as a whole.

J. Coxall (Yorkshire): in favour of an EC-appointed designer as a full member of the SSPC, with design being the responsibility of the whole committee.

P. Baxter (West London): his branch was against reverting to the pre-1985 situation which had proved unworkable; the editorial members had to have the final say.

V. Vanni (Glasgow): the 1985 change had been made because a conflict had arisen between the then design member (Comrade Slapper himself) and the editorial members of the Committee, Comrade Slapper claiming to have been victimised. Delegates had been forced to choose and had come out in favour of the editorial members. This had been done to ensure the smooth running of the committee, which was why it was best not to interfere with the status quo.

J. Bradley (Enfield and Haringey): there were two distinct tasks which ought to be kept separate: words (the responsibility of the editorial members) and design (that of the design member).

P. Lawrence (SW London): in favour of reverting to the old system, but the SSPC's terms of reference would have to be carefully drafted to avoid the same sort of conflict arising as before.

W. Buchanan (EC Member): there should be a pool of designers of the front cover who should be called on to submit alternative designs for the committee to choose from.

C. Skelton (non-delegate) proposed a system for monitoring sales throughout the month.

M. Ghebre (non-delegate): speaking as a street and pub seller, the cover was an important factor in sales; so it should avoid such things as sexism and giving the impression that we are not concerned with people's everyday problems, which not all recent covers had succeeded in doing.

A. Buick (SSPC): the problem wasn't so much the front cover, which the editorial members left, once the theme had been chosen, entirely in the hands of the design member, but the lay-out of the articles where a conflict could arise since the order and print size indicated an article's political importance.

C. Slapper (Islington), winding up, was against the whole committee making design decisions. As to the order, etc of articles, the design member was equally competent to make such a political decision. Care would be taken in drawing up any proposed new terms of reference.

Report of the New Pamphlets Committee

D. Donnelly (NPC): the NPC was planning a series of "What About?" leaflets, samples of which, on the Labour Party and on Human Nature, were available to delegates. The aim was to bridge the gap between what people heard at an outdoor meeting and the Standard. Such leaflets would be cheap to print and update as the text was on computer disk. The NPC would welcome delegates' views on them.

H. McLaughlin (Bolton) was very happy with the design of the leaflet except the back page where the D of P took up more space than in the Standard. What this really necessary?

B. Johnson (Swansea): had the NPC considered whether there was a market for the William Morris pamphlet planned for the centenary of the publication of "News from Nowhere" in 1990?

P. Bennett (NPC): Yes, the experience of a previous Party pamphlet on Morris, which had been one of our best sellers, had shown that there was a market for this sort of thing amongst Morris fans.

J. Bradley (Enfield and Haringey): Morris was important as he was a bridge between us and those concerned with Green issues, who

tended to reject socialism as they associated it with the Labour Party and with Russia and East Europe even though they were concerned with issues such as design and craft on which Morris had much to say from a socialist point of view.

H. Cottis(East London): liked the format, large type and illustrations in the "What About?" leaflets; they should prove to be very useful.

B. Roberts(Newcastle): we need a pamphlet on the Green Party more than on the Labour Party.

J. Dunn(Yorkshire): in favour of short, topical leaflets like these. He could see nothing wrong with putting the D of P in readable size on the back. After all, we weren't ashamed of it, were we?

S. Coleman(Islington): his branch felt that a pamphlet on Morris was not a priority (though this wasn't his view). The branch was also in favour of the "What About?" leaflets. He personally agreed with the view expressed by the Bolton delegate about not needing to overload them with what was essentially a historical document.

P. Lawrence(SW London) hoped any pamphlet on Morris would dissociate us from the utopian socialist approach expressed in "News from Nowhere" where all traces of coercion had unrealistically disappeared.

15. The need for a short pamphlet of approximately 8,000 words on Socialism and the Labour Party, dealing with the history of reform or revolution since the turn of the century.

P. Lawrence(SW London), opening, said his branch was in favour of such a new pamphlet, which would also be useful for Party education, as we didn't always make enough use of the historical evidence against the Labour Party's case that capitalism could be made to work for the benefit of all.

D. Perrin(Liverpool): such a pamphlet would be alright, but in view of the Party's finances, his branch felt that the theme should be covered as an expanded chapter in the new edition of "The Questions of the Day" pamphlet.

H. Cottis(East London): in favour of such a pamphlet.

S. Coleman(Islington): also in favour. To save money it could first be printed in the Standard as a series of articles. A good title would be "Labour Party or Socialist Party?"

J. Coxall(Yorkshire): also in favour, but her branch felt it should deal with the current situation not the historical past.

J. Usher(West London): his branch too didn't want a long didactic history of the Labour Party but rather, if we can afford it, a short pamphlet on the contemporary situation in the Labour Party.

G. Wilson(NW London): his branch was in favour, but he wasn't.

P. Shannon(Lancaster): strategy was relevant here, but who had laid down that it was the Labour Party that was our biggest enemy? Our main problem was that most people simply weren't interested in politics at all; overcoming this ought to be our main priority.

P. Bennett(NPC): the NPC would need guidance on priorities here as such a pamphlet was not on their agenda.

B. Johnson(Swansea) and F. Simpkins(SW London) moved:

"This ADM recommends the EC to publish a short pamphlet of approximately 8,000 words on Socialism and the Labour Party covering the issues of reform and revolution".

B. Johnson(Swansea), opening, said the Labour Party was no longer even reformist. It now accepted the market economy, i.e. capitalism, as it was, so announcing that major social reforms

were no longer on its agenda. A pamphlet was needed to expose this.

S. Coleman(Islington): opposed to the resolution, not because he was against such a pamphlet but because he was opposed to making decisions about pamphlets in this random way. We couldn't have all the pamphlets that were desirable and so needed to decide priorities as part of a proper strategy.

P. Lawrence(SW London): What strategy? We had no strategy at the moment. Could the NPC give details of where they were with the various pamphlets mentioned in their report?

P. Bennett(NPC) replied that the ecology pamphlet was 95 per cent ready while the Morris one would be a reprint of one of his articles or pamphlets with a short introduction that could be prepared rapidly. The previous committee had started work on a revised "Questions of the Day" but this had been suspended in view of the Party's financial situation.

P. Lawrence: so there was no conflict between a pamphlet on the Labour Party and any of the NPC's pamphlets. All four could be produced.

J. Usher(West London): this was a question of strategy and priorities which couldn't just be cobbled together today; that would be far too impromptu. The matter should be referred back to branches.

C. Slapper(Islington): if such a pamphlet were to be published, it should not just be printed but should be launched with a proper advertising campaign.

S. Easton(EC Member): if strategy was about choices, the more choices the better. The resolution was OK by him as it laid down no time-limit for publication.

B. Johnson(Swansea), winding up, said the EC should tell the NPC to prepare a pamphlet which needn't necessarily be printed if later there was no agreement on this.

The motion was lost by 7 votes for to 7 votes against.

Report of the Propaganda Committee

S. Coleman(Islington) was in favour of dropping the word "propaganda" from the Committee's name, as proposed in the circular prepared by Comrade Cox for West London's item for discussion No 18.

L. Cox(Propaganda Committee) appealed to any Party Speakers willing to appear on radio or TV for the Party to send in their names. A media familiarisation course was also being considered.

The report of the EC and Party Officers to the 1989 Delegate Meeting was adopted on a motion of D. Donnelly(Glasgow) and H. Cottis(East London).

16. The advisability of advertising in special interest journals when an article in the current Standard lends itself to it.

17. Methods of increasing sales of the Standard by expanding shop sales --the use of point of sale display material-- the use of posters near shops.

D. Donnelly(Glasgow), opening on the two items, said his branch had found that putting up posters round shops selling the Standard did have some effect on sales. The branch was also in favour of advertising the Standard and pamphlets in specialist journals. For instance, the September issue on the fiftieth anniversary of the last world war could have been advertised in "Peace News".

R. Cook(Birmingham): agreed with advertising in special interest

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journals, though not necessarily those Glasgow might have in mind, "Open University News", for example. J. Bradley (Publicity Committee): as our financial problems were beginning to be solved we might be entering a phase where the Committee would be able to spend more on advertising. Our aim should be to contact as many of those likely to become members as possible. The best way to do this would be by radio and TV but for various reasons this was not possible, so we were compelled to advertise in print. The best way here was to concentrate spending on national generalist publications; to go for specialist journals would be to scatter our limited resources and would also be less efficient in attracting those we wanted as we would attract a higher percentage interested in the specialist subject rather than in our general ideas.

It being 5pm, the Chair declared she had to close the meeting despite the fact that seven items had not been reached.

Report of the Standing Orders Committee

	No of Branches		No of Delegates	
	Represented		Sitting	
Saturday, 14 October, 11am		17		24
2pm		17		27
Sunday, 15 October 11am		17		27
2.45pm		16		27

<u>Collections:</u>			
	Saturday, 14 October		£212.87
	Sunday, 15 October		51.58
	TOTAL		£264.45